



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Public Health
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To: Families Enrolled in Early Intervention and All Interested Parties

From: Ron Benham, Part C Coordinator
Director, Bureau of Family Health and Nutrition

RE: Changes to Early Intervention Annual Fee

Date: August 19, 2010

I am writing to inform you of changes that will occur with the fee collected for Early Intervention services. These changes will take effect on September 15, 2010.

Increase in Fee Amounts: There will be an increase in the fee amounts at all levels. The amount a family will have to pay will still depend on family size and income. Families who are currently receiving services will not be assessed a new fee until one year after your current fee was determined. Your family size and income is matched to one of five (5) categories according to the Federal Income Poverty Guidelines. The fee amounts (by category) are listed in the updated Massachusetts Early Intervention Service and Fees brochure and your Early Intervention Program can provide you with a copy. The brochure and the Federal Income Poverty Guidelines are also posted on the DPH Early Intervention website. Go to <http://www.mass.gov/dph/earlyintervention> and click the on the “Who Pays” link.

Verification of Family Income: All families will need to provide proof of income and complete the Income Attestation Form to determine if they will pay a fee. Families who are currently receiving services will not need to provide proof of income until one year after your current fee was determined. Information about family size and income is sent to DPH through a secure system. Families will need to show proof of income by providing for review one of the following:

- Most recent tax return or,
- Most recent W2(s) and/or 1099(s) or,
- Last two (2) consecutive pay stubs/advice or,
- If none of the above is available, a family can provide a written statement of salary or wages that documents the amount and how often they are paid (e.g. weekly, monthly) from an employer. The statement must include company/employer name, address, phone number and supervisor/human resource staff signature.

This information is confidential. It is not available to any other program (public or private) without your written permission.

Declining to Provide Consent to Insurance or Proof of Income:

Families have the right to deny the EI program access to bill their health insurance or provide copies of income documents to EI program staff. Families who deny the EI program access to bill their health insurance or provide income information will be assessed the highest fee. This change will not take place for families currently receiving services until one year after your current fee was determined.

Suspension of Services:

Families with an outstanding balance of 60 days or more past due may be subject to the suspension of services. Services will begin once the fee is paid in full to the EI program. Services that were not provided during the time of the suspension will not be made up. This change will apply to families currently receiving services as well as those who enroll in EI as of September 15, 2010.

No family will be denied service based on an inability to pay the fee. Families may request an exemption from the fee by completing a Family Fee Exemption Form. An exemption from the fee is not retroactive. A family may request an exemption under the following circumstances:

- Out-of-pocket medical expenses during the past twelve (12) months meets or exceeds 15% of the family's gross income
- Out of pocket losses during the past twelve (12) months due to disaster such as fire, flood or tornado meets or exceeds 15% of their gross income

A family may ask that their family fee be reviewed by the EI program if there are any changes in family size or income (for example, the birth or adoption of another child or if a parent's salary is reduced). Proof of income will need to occur annually.

Fees will not be charged for services a child is entitled to receive at no cost to families under federal law. Part C of IDEA requires that some Early Intervention (EI) activities be provided at no charge to families. Those services include:

- **Child find** (outreach to find children who might be eligible for EI).
- **Evaluation and assessment** (to determine if a child is eligible for EI).
- **Service coordination** (activities that find resources for families).
- **Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)** development and their reviews.
- **Family rights** (known as procedural safeguards and due process).

Please speak with your EI service coordinator or the director at your EI program if you have any questions about the changes to the fee. You may also call Mary Dennehy-Colorusso at the Department of Public Health at 978-851-7261 ext 4016 (TTY: 978-851-0829) or Mary.dennehy-colorusso@state.ma.us.